

## **COMMISSIONERS TO VOTE ON WIND TURBINE PURCHASE**

*By Karl Puckett*

Cascade County commissioners are expected to vote Friday on purchasing a 50-kilowatt wind turbine and hiring a Bozeman-based company to install it.

The turbine would be located at the new county shop complex under construction off Interstate 15 northwest of Great Falls.

Commissioners meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Courthouse annex. The Friday meeting replaces the regular Tuesday commission meeting, which was rescheduled because it falls on Christmas.

If commissioners approve the turbine, the 100-foot lattice tower with three 23-foot-long rotor blades would be up by June, which is when the new complex is scheduled for completion.

The turbine will come close to supplying all of the energy needed at the new building, said Brian Clifton, county planning director.

Western Community Energy studied the past five years of electrical usage at the existing road and bridge department on 3rd Street Northwest in order to determine the estimated needs of the new building.

The project will cost \$192,179.

The county already has paid Western Community Energy \$6,834 for feasibility and study work. Western is applying for a \$10,000 grant, on behalf of the county, from NorthWestern Energy, which would lower the total cost.

The county plans to repay the up-front investment with savings in energy costs over 22 to 23 years.

Commissioners also are expected during the Friday meeting to appoint four members to the Planning Board, two members to the County Zoning Board of Adjustments and two members to the Native American Local Government Commission.